



CHAPEL HILL

FAMILY & COSMETIC DENTISTRY

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POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

DO NOT

- Rinse your mouth for the first 24 hours post-operatively.
- Drink alcohol or drive while using prescription pain medication.

For one week, to help prevent a dry socket, do not:

- Smoke
- Spit
- Drink from a straw (if teeth extracted)
- Drink carbonated beverages (if teeth extracted)

DO

- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Maintain a clear liquid diet the day of surgery only.
- Begin a soft diet the next day.
- It is important to stay well-hydrated and nourished while on medications.
- Take pain medication and antibiotics as prescribed.

ONCE AT HOME:

Place ice packs to face immediately to prevent swelling.

Ice should be used in 15 minute increments for the first 12-24 hours following surgery.

If swelling persists after 72 hours, apply warm moist heat packs.

ONE AND ONE-HALF HOURS AFTER SURGERY:

- Remove the gauze packs and replace with clean sterile gauze, if necessary.
- Drink at least ½ glass of clear liquid to prevent dehydration (ice tea is recommended, provided you like tea). If you've had any teeth extracted, do not use a straw.

EVENING OF SURGERY DAY:

Get up and move around the house for at least one hour this evening and again in the morning to aid in circulation and help keep swelling down.

If clear liquids aren't satisfying, you may have soft foods such as soups/broth or pasta with soda crackers.

THE DAY AFTER SURGERY

- Begin gently rinsing after eating and before bedtime with warm salt water.
- Do not aggressively swish or spit as this could dislodge the clot.
- Continue rinsing as directed for the next 2-3 weeks. Food in the sockets is the greatest source of infection.

- No commercial mouthwash or peroxide.

FOOD SUGGESTIONS

While you are still numb you may have:

- Slushy beverage
- Gatorade
- Applesauce
- Pudding
- Jell-O
- Cottage cheese
- Apple juice
- Milkshake
- Yogurt

After the first day, more solid foods can be eaten:

- Macaroni and cheese
- Pancakes
- Mashed potatoes
- Scrambled eggs
- Baked potato
- Pasta
- Meatloaf

- Foods and liquids should be cool or lukewarm for the next couple of days (not hot).
- Soft, easy to chew foods are recommended.
- Using straws or smoking is discouraged for at least 72 hours.
- Dairy products may cause nausea in some patients the day of surgery.
- Should pain medication be needed, be sure to eat or drink something before taking the pills. This may help reduce the nausea sometimes associated with pain medication.

BLEEDING

Keep firm pressure on the gauze sponge that has been placed in your mouth for 30-45 minutes. If bleeding persists, replace the gauze with fresh sterile gauze and keep a steady biting pressure on it. Repeat as often as necessary.

If bleeding should start again, try a moistened tea bag in place of the gauze. Keep your head elevated and remain still and quiet.

Oozing and excessive saliva may persist overnight.

TO RELIEVE PAIN

For moderate pain, one or two tablets of Tylenol or Extra Strength Tylenol may be taken every three to four hours or Ibuprofen, (Motrin or Advil) 200 mg tablets may be taken every 3-4 hours. Be sure to take pain medication on a full stomach to avoid an upset stomach.

For severe pain take the tablets prescribed for pain as directed. The prescribed pain medicine will make you groggy and will slow down your reflexes. Do not drive an automobile or work around machinery. Avoid alcoholic beverages. Pain or discomfort following surgery should subside more and more every day. If pain persists, it may require attention and you should call the office.

NAUSEA AND VOMITING

In the event of nausea and/or vomiting following surgery, do not take anything by mouth for at least an hour including the prescribed medicine. You should then sip on coke, tea or ginger ale. You should

sip slowly over a fifteen-minute period. When the nausea subsides you can begin taking solid foods and the prescribed medicine. If you still continue to experience the nausea and vomiting call our office at once.

SUTURES

Sutures are sometimes placed in the area of surgery to minimize post-operative bleeding and to help healing. Sometimes they become dislodged; this is no cause for alarm. Just remove the suture from your mouth and discard it. The sutures will be removed approximately one week after surgery. The removal of sutures requires no anesthesia or needles. It takes only a minute or so, and there is no discomfort associated with this procedure. So it's really nothing to worry about.

OTHER COMPLICATIONS

If numbness of the lip, chin, or tongue occurs there is typically no cause for alarm. You should be aware that if your lip or tongue is numb you could bite it and not feel it, so be careful. Call our office if you have any questions about this.

Occasionally, patients may feel hard projections in the mouth with their tongue. They are not roots; they are the bony walls, which supported the tooth. These projections usually smooth out spontaneously. If not, they can be removed.

Sore throats and pain when swallowing are not uncommon. The muscles get swollen. The normal act of swallowing can then become painful. This will subside in 2-3 days.

Stiffness (Trismus) of the jaw muscles may cause difficulty in opening your mouth for a few days following surgery. This is normal post-operative event, which will resolve in time.

REMEMBER YOUR FOLLOW-UP VISIT

It is advisable to return for a postoperative visit to make certain healing is progressing satisfactorily. A follow-up visit will be scheduled. In the meantime, maintain a healthful diet, observe rules for proper oral hygiene and call our office if you feel something is not going right.

PLEASE CALL AND REPORT:

- Bleeding that cannot be controlled
- Temperature or rash
- Persistent vomiting
- Onset of severe pain 3-5 days after surgery
- Any questions or concerns